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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000115

SENSITIVE
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NSC FOR MGAVIN, LETIM
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PASS TO AMEMBASSY MALABO

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: GHAZI DISCUSSES FEBRUARY 20 GOS-JEM AGREEMENT WITH SE
GRATION

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert E. Whitehead, Charge d'Affaires; REASON:
1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) Summary: In a February 21 meeting, Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salahdeen told SE Gration that the newly signed framework agreement between the GOS and JEM contained provisions for a ceasefire and prisoner release, the latter of which will begin on February 23. The agreement does not codify power sharing arrangements, he said, emphasizing that national elections would be held in April as scheduled; pursuant to an NCP victory, the National Electoral Law could be amended to clear the way for additional appointed seats for Darfur. Ghazi credited the signing of the agreement to the personal involvement of GOC President Deby, noting that he (Ghazi) intended to pursue additional Presidential-level diplomacy in coming weeks, including engagement with Libya's Qaddafi. While praising the agreement for bringing JEM back to a serious negotiating track, Ghazi expressed concern that absent the participation of the Fur, any new agreement is bound to fail. He urged SE Gration to continue to engage with Fur rebels and civil society activists in the Doha process so that a final agreement could be signed by mid-March. End Summary.

12. (C) On February 21, SE Gration met with Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salahdeen, who one day prior had signed a framework with JEM on behalf of the GOS in N'Djamena. Ghazi stated that the text of the agreement will be made public on February 23, but noted that it contained provisions for a ceasefire and prisoner release, the latter which has been announced by President Bashir and will commence on February 23. It also contains references to power and wealth sharing, though it did not codify particular arrangements. Ghazi noted that Khalil Ibrahim had demanded a postponement of the elections, but was told both by President Deby and Ghazi himself that this was impossible. Provided that the NCP and its allies win a clear majority, Ghazi asserted that the Electoral Law could be amended to clear the way for additional appointed seats for Darfur. Overall, Ghazi noted that the significance of the agreement was that eliminated the "ridiculous, phony" demands for power sharing and compensation previously made by JEM Chairman Khalil Ibrahim and brought him back on a serious negotiating track.

13. (C) Ghazi credited the agreement to the personal involvement of President Deby, noting that presidential-level diplomacy was the best hope for an expeditious settlement to the Darfur conflict. To this end, Ghazi said he was seeking involvement of Libyan President Qaddafi, noting that he plans a meeting between Bashir, Deby and Qaddafi in the near future. Noting that the Qataris were nervous about the agreement's effect on ongoing negotiations in Doha, Ghazi stated he called GoQ Foreign Minister Al Mahmoud to re-assure him that the GOS was still committed to the Doha process and that it was not pursuing a different course. He also phoned the various rebel factions in Doha to ensure them the agreement was not exclusionary, he said.

¶4. (C) While the agreement with JEM is a promising development, Ghazi noted that JEM is ultimately a Zaghawa movement and that there can be no viable resolution of the conflict without the added participation of the Fur. Faced with the intransigence of Paris-based SLA Chairman Abdul Wahid Al Nur, there are limited alternatives for the Fur to assume a leadership mantle, he said. Former North Darfur Governor Dr. Tijane Sese, increasingly active in the Doha talks and civil society circles, is not very dynamic but "probably the best person at the moment," he said, citing his name recognition and reputation for neutrality. Fur Shura President Dr. Idris Yousif is another alternative but problematic for a number of reasons, among them that his mother is not Fur, he said. Ghazi emphasized that the GOS has no objection to Abdel Wahid joining the peace talks at any time, so long as he does not hold up the process. Ghazi and SE Gration agreed to work together in the coming weeks to ensure that the Fur have ample and credible representation in the peace process.

¶5. (C) On the subject of elections, Ghazi touted the work of the National Elections Commission (NEC) as "the biggest political operation since independence," and lamented that his obligations to the Darfur file had interfered with his campaign for parliament. He has also been unable to engage in discussions between the NCP and SPLM on outstanding CPA issues, he said. With regard to the SPLM's declared boycott of elections in South Kordofan, Ghazi said that Governor Ahmed Haroun had recently shown him a proposal to hold national elections as scheduled, but postpone state and local elections in South Kordofan until a new census could be carried out. Ghazi concluded the meeting by urging SE Gration to continue engaging on the Darfur peace process, CPA and elections issues in

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the coming months.

¶6. (C) Comment: If the GOS succeeds in bringing JEM into the fold, it eliminates the only viable military threat in Darfur, as the other armed rebel movements remain weak, fragmented and largely irrelevant. Without effective demobilization of rogue Arab militia and Chadian armed opposition groups and a serious crackdown on criminality, however, a ceasefire or eventual peace deal signed in Doha will do little to change the security situation on the ground.

¶7. (U) This cable has been cleared by the Office of the Special Envoy.

WHITEHEAD